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AUTHOR	Tomlinson, Richard
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ABSTRACT

The fifth of 16 booklets designed for use in an Open University course in special education in the United Kingdom, this document focuses on life as a handicapped adult. Experiences of adults are presented to illustrate obstacles to becoming independent and overcoming low expectations. Programs within schools to prepare handicapped students for life after school are described, as are community work preparation courses and adult training centers, where clients learn specific job skills and more general work-related skills. Special programs in higher education are considered, and examples of curricula noted. Issues of responsibility for the post-schoool handicapped student are briefly examined. Information on employment addresses the prospect for jobs, the bureaucracy associated with the employment of disabled people and alternatives to competitive employment. Larger social questions of the alternatives to competitive employment. Larger social questions of the relationship of education to the labor market are considered. Suggested readings and activities are listed throughout. (CL)

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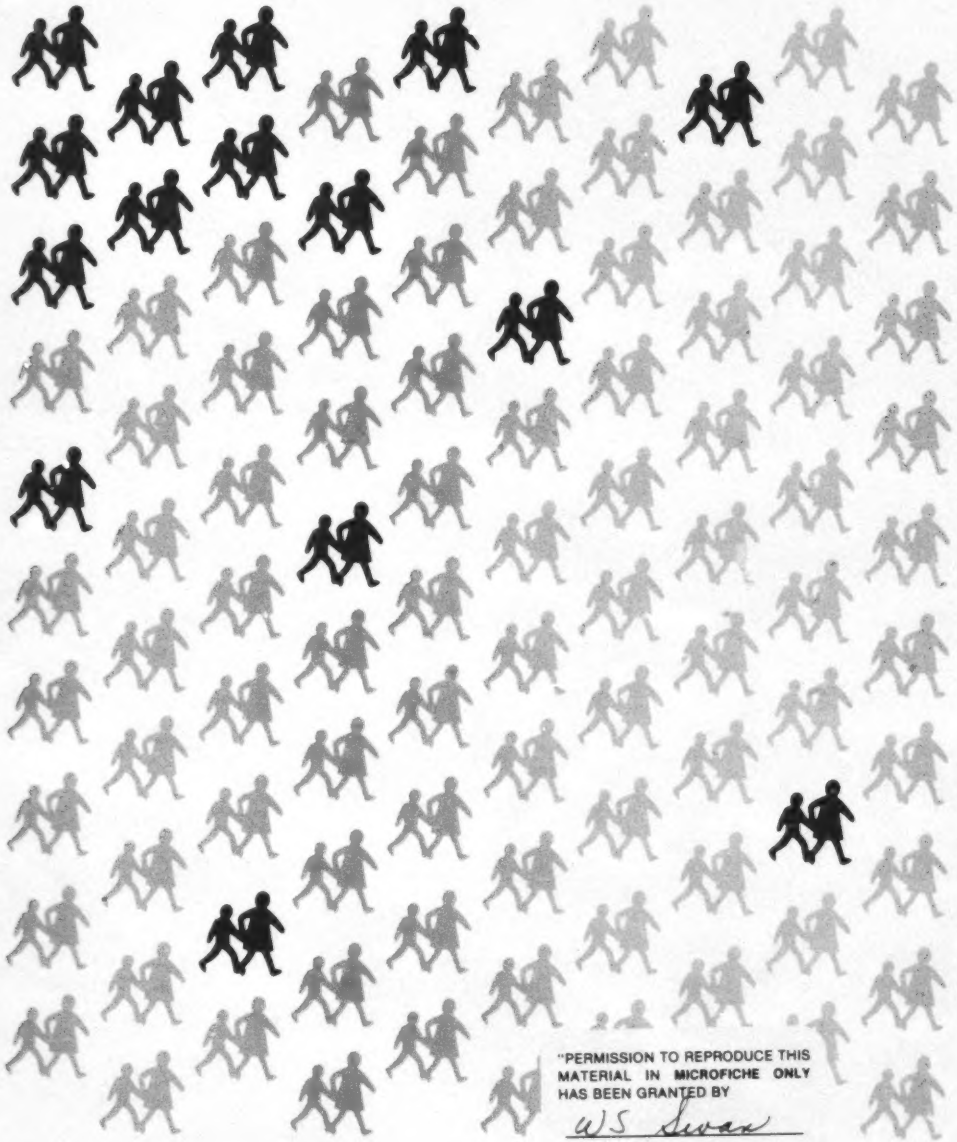
The Open University
Educational Studies: A Second Level Course
Special Needs in Education

EDUCATION FOR ADULT LIFE?



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The Open University
Educational Studies: A Second Level Course
E241 Special Needs in Education

Unit 4 Education for adult life?

Prepared by Richard Tomlinson for the Course Team

The Open University Press

The E241 Course Team

Julie Barnfather (secretary)
Carolyn Baxter (course co-ordinator)
Tony Booth (author)
Nick Brenton (BBC producer)
Dennis Briggs (author)
Jim Burge (BBC producer)
Ronnie Flynn (research assistant)
Chris Gravell (editor)
Euan Henderson (IET)
Audrey Lambart (staff tutor)
Rob Lyon (designer)
Kathy Morris (liaison librarian)
John Pettit (editor)
Keith Pocklington (author)
Patricia Potts (author)
Chris Pym (reading member)
Sue Sheldon (course manager)
June Statham (case studies author)
Andrew Sutton (author)
Will Swann (author)
David Thomas (author)
Richard Tomlinson (author)

External assessors
Seamus Hegarty
Philip Williams

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Note on reading

Set reading

The readings for this unit are to be found in:

SWANN, W. (ed.) (1981) *The Practice of Special Education*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell/The Open University Press (the Reader). They are:

JAMIESON, M., PARLETT, M. and POCKLINGTON, K. (1977) 'How children cope' (Reading 1.1).

PANCKHURST, J. (1980) 'Special provision in post-school education' (Reading 3.6).

The case studies for this unit are to be found in:

BOOTH, A. J. and STATHAM, J. (1982) *The Nature of Special Education*, London, Croom Helm/The Open University Press. They are:

'Jacqueline Cunningham: a daughter' (Case study 19).

'Four physically handicapped graduates' (Case study 29).

'An ESN(S) school and the labour market' (Case study 34).

'After school: further education for handicapped adolescents' (Case study 37).

'Four handicapped teenagers in transition' (Case study 49).

Further reading

If you would like to pursue some of the ideas in this unit, I suggest:

CAMPLING, J. (ed.) (1981) *Images of ourselves: women with disabilities talking*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

DIXON, K. and HUTCHINSON, D. (eds) (1979) *Further Education for Handicapped Students*, Bolton, Bolton College of Education (Technical).

GREENGROSS, W. (1976) *Entitled to Love: the sexual and emotional needs of the handicapped*, London, Malaby Press.

KEDNEY, R. J. and WHELAN, E. (eds) (1976) *The Education of Mentally Handicapped Young Adults*, Bolton, Bolton College of Education (Technical).

PANCKHURST, J. (1980) *Focus on Physical Handicap*, Windsor, National Foundation for Educational Research.

1 *Growing up*

Introduction

1.1 American television viewers are often subjected to programmes designed to raise large sums of money for a worthy cause. Typically, the host of such a show introduces a scene designed to capture the sympathy of viewers and encourage them to send their last penny. If the cause concerns handicap, the scene may be of an adorable, flaxen-haired little child who happens to have spina bifida or polio. Charities in this country are not far behind in their advertising techniques. We are all familiar with the wistful smiles of the little boy in a wheelchair, or the little girl in the walking frame. However, the television and advertising people carefully avoid the fact that the little boy or girl grow up. Wistful smiles on the faces of handicapped adolescents and handicapped adults do not sell nearly as well.

1.2 This unit is about what happens when handicapped children grow up. It questions how they are prepared for life after school, and examines the options open to them. Special needs do not cease at school-leaving. In many cases they become more complex and less easily identifiable. This is not because the young people themselves change. It is because the circumstances in which they find themselves alter and because the expectations of family and society change, and because the preparation that they have received up until that moment has not fully introduced them to what life after school is like.

1.3 Unit 1/2 explored the categorization of handicap and attempted to go beyond the jargon of the professionals to the lives of children themselves. When many of the young people who may have been considered ESN(M) or maladjusted leave school they are no longer officially regarded as handicapped. They become school-leavers, like the rest of their generation. Their problems, however, may not be reduced, and their special needs may not vanish. Declassification may seem to give children who had been segregated in special schools the chance to return to the mainstream of society, but they may re-emerge as a special group by their over-representation in social services files, or in unemployment figures, or in prisons. When handicapped children leave school, official categorization is replaced by informal systems, which may exert greater power in shaping their lives than any official scheme. People often expect those who *look* strange to talk and act strangely. Physically handicapped people, those with speech problems and the deaf, are often expected to be 'stupid'. But paradoxically the visible evidence of handicap may offer more chance of social acceptance. For people are sometimes unable to cope with the shock and incongruence of 'invisible' handicaps. This is reflected in the results of fund-raising (the blind are always a better bet for fund-raising than the deaf), and when it comes to jobs, physically handicapped people do much better than people with epilepsy or a history of mental handicap. A classification system comes into play that is founded on prejudice.

1.4 Unit 1/2 suggested that the aim of integration was to give handicapped young people the opportunity to participate in the educational and social life of the community. The need to provide such an opportunity does not diminish on school-leaving. It becomes even more pertinent as young people try to cope with the pressures of getting a job, moving away from home and forming a circle of friends beyond parental and school influences. Some are unable to respond to such possibilities, and retreat into an almost monastic segregation, confined by the walls of their parents' home and limited in their social contacts to their family and their parents' friends.

Aspirations, expectations and options

1.5 You may be familiar with the advertisement for insurance which depicts the 'normal' course of masculine development, from education to office to marriage, children and a larger house, middle age and grandparenthood. Such a picture is absurdly over-generalized and aimed at a particular occupational group. But we all meet such social expectations as we negotiate our ways through careers which combine elements of our

Having epilepsy may stop you driving a car, but it need not stop you being interested or knowledgeable.

own aspirations, the expectations of others and the options that are open to us. The result of this may depend on our own personal capacities and the strength of the barriers to our desires. Such barriers may be quite practical, such as money, or more elusive, like the information we are given or the attitudes that people adopt towards us. Handicapped people may experience particular difficulties in developing their aspirations and coming to terms with or overcoming the expectations of others and the options that are made available to them.

1.6 A man, physically handicapped since birth, had when fourteen described his ambitions in an essay to a teacher at a special school.

> I had written in this essay that I was over six foot, had broad shoulders and was dark and good looking. You see I had been told by a doctor that by the time I was sixteen that was exactly what I'd be. In point of fact I am now at the age of 27 something like three foot in height and permanently in a wheelchair. I described in this essay how I wanted to be a spy when I grew up. The teacher read it and then burst out laughing. He insisted on reading it out to the whole class and then he turned to me and said, 'Look mate, you've got it all wrong. There is no way you're going to be a spy. It's about time you realised exactly what situation you're in and came to terms with it. Grow up.' I managed to contain myself in the classroom but at break I found a lonely part of the playground and burst into tears.

1.7 This brief anecdote highlights many of the confusions and dishonesties presented to a disabled young person. Why had the doctor deliberately lied about his course of development? The teacher may have been extremely crude and tactless, but he had been honest. Why had not some doubts occurred to the boy before? Did he believe in miracles? Did he really live in a dream world that allowed him to imagine in all seriousness that he could become a spy? Perhaps he had erected a necessary defence against the possibility of a life of total dependence. Perhaps the school had made little attempt to introduce its pupils to life outside and after school, and this isolation fostered an unreal, probably romantic view of life.

1.8 Many occupations were out of the question for this man because of his physical limitations. But many other handicapped people are hindered only because of the attitudes of other people. A young person with cerebral palsy said:

> It makes me angry that people aren't willing to know us. I'm not sure whether they don't want to learn or they can't learn. I don't understand it. It just annoys me that there are people like me walking around without anyone to talk to, they're just inside their own world and nobody will go up and talk to them because they walk funny. It's stupid.

Another person, mentally handicapped, expressed the problem differently:

Q What sort of things do people do that make you angry?

A Call me a lot of names, I don't like that. It makes me angry all the time. I don't like it . . . even the boys at the factory call me a lot of names. I tell them all to go back to school.

Q Why do they call you names?

A I don't know, they're doing it just for fun.

Q Do you think that they think you're different, and that's why they call you names?

A I expect they think I'm different.

Q Do you feel different from them?

A Yeah, I feel different.

Q If you could tell all the children in the world how to behave with you, what would you say to them?

A I say to them that they shouldn't call people names, it's the wrong thing to do to call people names.

Expectations

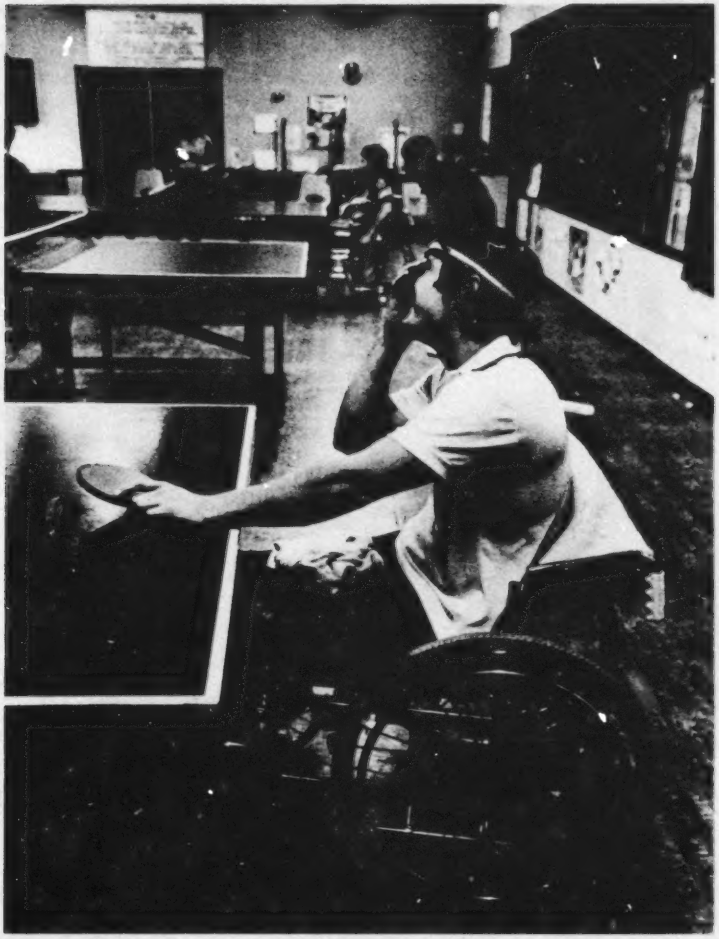
1.9 Both society in general and the handicapped themselves often have low expectations of their educational performance, which are frequently unjustified, and can be a major barrier to young people's development. Handicapped people are also expected to behave differently. The physically handicapped may be expected to be docile, perhaps in preparation for a life as a passive recipient of services. Indeed a difference is often made between those traumatically injured, for example as a result of a traffic accident, and those congenitally handicapped and educated from the start in a special school. The former are often viewed as 'difficult and rebellious' within special education, whereas the latter behave 'responsibly' and 'co-operatively'. If handicapped young people display aggression, then they are often labelled as 'behaviour problems'.

1.10 One of the greatest barriers to handicapped young people is that they are expected to be dependent, not just physically, but also socially and emotionally. Not only do handicapped young people have to fight to establish what they think is an acceptable level of dependence, but they have to maintain it against the expectations of family and society. Paradoxically, 'independence' is frequently held up as the ultimate goal for handicapped people, even though we are all dependent on other people. We may, in setting this specific target for handicapped young people, actually demand more of them than we would of ourselves.

Options

1.11 Nationally, the range of options for further education and styles of adult life for handicapped young people is very varied, but the options available to any one handicapped school leaver in any one place are often extremely limited, not just because of the lack of provision, or the lack of information, but also because of the unwillingness or inability of professionals to consider alternatives imaginatively. They rarely consider alternative uses for existing buildings and resources or the sharing of schemes between services or with parents' groups.

1.12 I have tried to give, in this unit, a general picture of possibilities for further education and work, but it will inevitably seem patchy and confused. One of the unit's central themes is preparation for work. It is still assumed that the objective of any post-school provision for the handicapped is to enable them to get jobs. Frequently, terms such as the 'dignity of work', the 'conferment of adult status', are used to justify all the work preparation and work experience courses. Indeed, government support for post-school provision has concentrated on the vocational aspects of courses. The organization of such programmes has blurred the distinction between 'training' and 'education', so that any other aims are submerged in the general thrust for jobs. This is strange given the current economic situation, which, in the middle of 1981, included nearly three million unemployed. Yet the government continues to pour money into training programmes. So just what is the aim of post-school education? A job, when there is none? Are there other aims? If so, what are they and how can they be realized?



The experience of losing even a game of table tennis and keeping one's sense of humour is part of the challenge of disappointment.

1.13 The problems of growing up and leaving home are faced by everyone. However, only recently has the problem of unemployment reached such proportions that school-leavers are having to consider seriously alternatives to work. Many are now experiencing the lack of opportunity experienced for years by handicapped young people.

1.14 Unit 1/2 described how the opportunities for the severely and profoundly handicapped may be suddenly curtailed at the death of their parents. At this point they often suffer the double trauma of loss and a new institutional regime in residential care or subnormality hospital.

Human rights

1.15 I would argue that adults have three basic rights in our society, the right to independence, the right to social participation and the right to love and care. People have a right to determine their own life style; they can choose where to live, who to live with and how to live. Second, people have a right to participate in the design, management and operation of society. This is sometimes done through legal or political means such as voting, sometimes it is done through more informal means, such as

having a drink with friends, or belonging to a club. Finally I would add that people have the right to receive and give love and care and their need for love rarely diminishes as they cease to be children and grow up and grow into old age. Of course we do not regard these as inviolable in all circumstances: our rights do not extend to a life of murder and robbery. It is clear too that a balance has to be struck between rights; forced independence can become exclusion from social participation and care.

1.16 Legally, we may only deprive people of their rights if they are convicted of a crime, or certified as insane, but there are many other ways in which we can reduce people's rights, sometimes passively, by, for instance, withholding assistance. For dependent people may need our active intervention if they are to be protected from exploitation and granted full human rights. When we look at how handicapped children become adults, we need to consider whether they are given both the skills we all need to cope and the same rights as others. We have to see whether the curricula they are offered in schools and the circumstances in which they are offered actually give them the best possible preparation for their adult lives.

Becoming independent

1.17 Unit 3 looked at families with handicapped children. For many of them, the stress is never greater than when the children are preparing and being prepared for leaving school. It is curious that this, one of the great problems confronting a family, has only very recently received 'academic' attention, and it reflects the distance between parents and professionals in their perceptions of problems. For most families, the nature of the relationship between parents, siblings and handicapped child is brought in sharp focus at the point of leaving school.

1.18 Before school-leaving the child's dependence is understood; after leaving, the definition of that dependence can become very hazy and disquieting. Many parents of handicapped young people find their children's physical and sexual maturation a major problem. They may deny the existence of such a problem by attempting to treat their young adult as an infant. It is not uncommon for parents of a handicapped young person to continue to feel responsible for that person's appearance and behaviour far into adult life. This can lead to the strange paradox of a handicapped adult wearing clothes chosen by his parents which actually make him or her look considerably older, and certainly more conservative and old-fashioned than his or her able-bodied peers. This prolonged denial of independence is an exaggeration of the pangs of anxiety that grip many parents as their normal children grow away from them. Some parents of handicapped young people can get into a routine of support that dominates their lives and a break may be more traumatic for them than it is for their children.

David is 27 and works at a local furniture factory. He lives with his parents. His mother says that people don't think he's as old as he is. They tend to look on him as if he were a child.

The right to love

1.19 As I have suggested, almost all people need warmth and care from others, and we have to try to ensure that handicapped people are granted this right. Seen in this light, any provision which precludes the possibility for caring relationships is morally wrong. Yet, as you may be well aware, much of the residential accommodation provided for handicapped people and in particular the subnormality hospitals do indeed limit such relationships. Frank Thomas described the situation in one 'average' ward in the hospital in which he worked where staff were deliberately moved if they became too involved with the residents (Ryan and Thomas, 1981). Social attitudes towards the rights of the handicapped for independence and love are brought into focus most clearly in discussions about sex. In her book on the sexual rights of handicapped people called *Entitled to Love*, Wendy Greengross (1975) talks of the Peter Pan syndrome: 'Keep the child childlike and the questions of sex need not arise.' If you keep the child childlike, it is unnecessary to teach any of the biological facts of physical maturation or their social implications. Greengross tells of a young man who had left a residential institution to live in a more open community and was returned to the institution because he had been masturbating in public. He was thoroughly confused and upset because he had never been taught that this was inappropriate.

1.20 Wendy Greengross comments on the unwillingness of society to see handicapped people as being anything but childlike. Sexual development is frequently ignored and an interest in sex is often viewed as irrelevant and smutty. The sexual rights of handicapped people are only now beginning to be taken seriously. Until recently in many institutions it has been impossible for couples to marry and to share accommodation. It is usually expected, or hoped, that mentally handicapped people will not have any sexual life at all. When one father learnt of his daughter's pregnancy (she was an athetoid spastic), in spite of the fact that she was over eighteen, he insisted firstly on an abortion, against the wishes of the girl, and then sterilization.

1.21 At several residential centres, discussions are held on the need for inhabitants to obtain some sort of sexual relief, at the hands, literally, of the care staff or by the use of aids and/or prostitutes. Sexual problems of disabled people are increasingly recognized as real and in need of solution or help. Accordingly, in 1973 a committee calling itself Sexual Problems of the Disabled (SPOD) was established under the auspices of the National Fund for Research into Crippling Diseases. The committee aims to make the public and professions aware of the sexual needs and difficulties of disabled people, to provide information and offer counselling and advice. As Dr Greengross says:

> Friendship and love have always been valued: now gradually over the last few years we are beginning to realise that sex is as valuable a vehicle for the expression of feelings as any other. It may not be right for everyone; but everyone has the right to make their own decisions about themselves and no one adult has the right to ride roughshod over any other, making decisions arbitrarily for him.

1.22 Of course, it would be a mistake to suggest that all handicapped young people are deliberately deprived of adult status. Many handicapped people successfully overcome the barriers to their independence and actively take control of their own lives.

The right to participate

1.23 The integration issue, which Unit 1/2 introduced, can be seen to involve a discussion of the democratic rights of citizens. If all citizens are to make informed decisions which depend on a knowledge of the nature and structure of social institutions, then they must be in a position to gain that knowledge. How can a blind child brought up in a residential school learn to make decisions about the educational system or an adult in a rural residential home discover the issues and policies of the local council? If people have a right to participation, then we deprive them of their rights if we fail to give them the opportunity to participate.

Reading Now read 'How children cope' by Monika Jamieson, Malcolm Parlett and Keith Pocklington (Reading 1.1.). This describes how individual characteristics, options and expectations combine in the education of visually impaired children. You will see that

the interaction between these factors is not only important as people become adults, but throughout childhood.

Reading Now read Case study 29, 'Four physically handicapped graduates'. Try to identify the particular strategy that each has evolved in order to cope, and in addition try to assess the impact of their past experiences on their ability to cope with university.

Comment (a) To varying degrees, Anna, Josh and Ray have been restricted by their past experiences at home and school. Anna's parents were over-protective; they could not anticipate her leaving home. She feels her special school isolated her from the real world. Josh implicitly recognizes the same: that at his special school he could be on top, and to stay on top he continues with wheelchair basketball. On the other hand he maintains it was the special school that made him confident. Ray was restricted in both settings. In the ordinary school he was not given enough support, and in his special school he was isolated from the outside world. For none of these three was the option of an academic education in association with their normal peers available, as it was for Anita.

(b) Each has developed particular means to cope. Anna has been helped with her work by fellow students and the university. Socially, she consciously tries to be accepted by dressing fashionably, and she has clearly developed something of a thick skin (she calls it 'pig-headedness'). Josh gets by by insisting on being treated as normal by other students, but paradoxically he also remains an active part of the disabled community. Anita's technique is clearest: she exploits her disability and other people's attitudes towards it. Anita's is the only case where she has only had to overcome her disability in order to cope at university. Anna, Josh and Ray have had to deal with much more.

Reading Now read Case study 19, 'Jacqueline Cunningham: a daughter'. The first part of the case study is concerned with the struggle of the parents to keep Jacqueline within the educational system and the second part with her life as a young adult. Make notes of the ways in which Jacqueline's adult life is restricted.

Comment (a) The Cunninghams displayed considerable strength in combating the official assessment of their daughter and keeping her within a school. Their battle formed part of the tide which eventually led to the Education (Handicapped Children) Act (1970).

(b) As Jacqueline grew older there appears to have been a shift of attitude towards her by her parents which corresponds to her anticipated social position. Her mother did begin to regard her as mentally handicapped and made her a member of the local mental handicap society, where Jacqueline joined in eagerly with the social activities.

(c) Although Jacqueline's mother cares a great deal for her, she sometimes finds it difficult to encourage her independence; after once being knocked down, Jacqueline does not go to town on her own. Often it may be quicker for Mrs Cunningham to do something than allow Jacqueline to do it for herself; it takes her too long to make lunch, for example.

Alison can travel to the supermarket and shop on her own. . .

(d) The dependence is mutual: Jacqueline's mother has got used to looking after her, and losing her will mean 'a terrific adjustment on my part'.

(e) Jacqueline's world is limited to an area arranged for her. This is most marked with respect to any possible relationship with a man. Her 'boyfriend' lives miles away and their parents would have to actively encourage a relationship if it were to develop at all.

(f) Jacqueline may not have learnt all the skills she needs for living away from home, but there are indications that she could learn them. She can cook, use the telephone and generally look after herself.

(g) Until recently, there was no serious alternative to living at home: only a badly supervised social services hostel.

1.24 In the rest of the unit, I will be looking at what post-school education and employment can do to help handicapped young people to live lives over which they have control, and which allow them to participate in society. In section 2 I look at school-leaving programmes; section 3 looks at provision after school, and section 4 looks at employment opportunities. Finally, in section 5, I assess some likely trends for the future of handicapped young people.

. . . but since Alison has cerebral palsy, at times it's easier if someone helps by holding a cup to drink from.

2 *School leaving*

2.1 Handicapped young people seldom reach adulthood without considerable problems. What are the reasons for this? How do the institutions that provide school-leaving and post-school programmes contribute to easing their transition to adulthood?

2.2 Nearly all secondary schools have some sort of preparatory course for pupils about to leave school, and place particular emphasis on this when the pupils do not study for general examinations. The course content presents considerable problems, so much so that, on the raising of the school-leaving age (ROSLA), some schools opted for yet another examination syllabus leading to a Certificate in Extended Education (CEE); others developed a community-oriented approach whereby young non-examination pupils become involved in local projects aimed at providing some sort of social service; yet others adopted vocational courses that could form a bridge to further education. The City and Guilds Foundation courses are an example of this.

2.3 Handicapped children are very often non-examination pupils. There are exceptions to this, and in particular some schools for the physically handicapped and the blind pride themselves on their 'grammar school' approach. But the majority of schools are faced with the prospect of devising a programme that prepares young handicapped people for the transition into adult life.

2.4 It would seem sensible that the content of this programme should reflect the likely future plans and prospects of the leaver, but this is by no means always the case. Even if it was, there is no clear picture of what these plans and prospects might be. Is the aim to get a job? What are the prospects? Is the plan to produce a socially competent young person? To what extent does that allow for a productive, fulfilling life after school? A typical programme might attempt to cover all of these. Here is an example from an ESN(M) school:

> The basic aim of any school curriculum should be to make each child as independent and self-sufficient as possible. If this is successfully achieved, the transition for the leaver from school to adult life should be reasonably smooth. For children with special educational needs, however, this can be a very anxious and worrying time, for not only are their basic educational skills underdeveloped but also their social competence is below that of the 'average' school-leaver.

2.5 This curriculum attempts to fulfil the aims of independence and self-sufficiency through a 'four-point programme'. The points are: 'general educational development', 'social competence and personal development', 'development of motor skills' and 'careers advice and information'. In a letter to parents the post-school options are listed. They are a local college of further education, a work experience course, a training workshop teaching specific skills, and an adult training centre. Thus, despite the stated aims of the programme, the real emphasis is on the vocational section. When we investigate post-school provision in more detail we will see considerable commitment made to vocational programmes funded by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC).

2.6 A contrast to this type of programme is offered in work done at one ESN(S) school, described in the following case study.

Reading Now read Case study 49, 'Four handicapped teenagers in transition'.

Comment (a) Basing the programme outside school immediately withdraws the structure of support that often dictates behaviour. Morton remarks on how much more articulate they are than they had been in school. The new situation encourages the assumption of adult roles, in that group decisions have to be made and initiatives taken.

(b) The programme also allows the observers to note specific points that could be worked on either at school, or at home. Many of the general assumptions made by both parents and teachers are tested and a more accurate picture of the individual's capabilities drawn.

(c) It should be noted that this case study describes a programme for four young people who are visibly identifiable as handicapped. They cannot 'pass' in society and to

that extent they are different from young people identified as ESN(M). This may have a bearing on the sort of programme devised, as the pressure to aspire to normality is not so great.

(d) A final point is that this experiment was carried out on the basis that it seemed a good idea, rather than as a result of a carefully structured curriculum. In other words, Morton was prepared to find out in the light of experience whether this approach was useful or not.

2.7 As indicated earlier, not all schools have put as much thought and endeavour into programmes as the two examples quoted above. In a survey of 29 special schools in the North West, Mary Nesbitt (1976) found a lack of thought on the content of school-leaving programmes. She asked questions about four areas:

(a) *Curriculum in general* No school appeared to have discussed aims and objectives as a team. There was little evidence of forward planning or evaluation. The curriculum was interpreted as the subjects in the timetable. There was an increased concentration on academic work in the last year.

(b) *Preparation for employment* The majority of schools felt that their contact with adult training centres was inadequate. Many teachers had low expectations for their pupils, considering most of them unemployable. There was no vocational counselling in any of the schools.

(c) *Preparation for leisure* Time in the weekly programme was set aside for hobbies in the majority of schools. Few schools, however, had close links with the community and few children belonged to youth clubs.

(d) *Development of independent living skills* There was no marked concentration on this aspect of the curriculum in the last year. Parental involvement seemed minimal. 27 of the 29 schools gave a purpose-built room for the teaching of living skills a high priority.

2.8 This seems pretty damning. But when going through any investigation it is as well to look for what is left out and any evidence of the investigator's own particular prejudices. For example, no mention is made of the number of schools which are residential, which would reduce parental involvement. The investigator's comment that there were few daily objectives set indicates her own approach to teaching. However, even given this, there still seems to be an absence of careful thinking and discussion on the aims and objectives of the programme.

2.9 So far I have laid emphasis on the programme as distinct from the needs of the school-leaver. Ideally these two should match but options available are not limitless, and even the most comprehensive and far-sighted of programmes cannot necessarily prepare a young person for all the vicissitudes of adult life. Gloria, for example, attended a school which professed a leaving programme very similar to the first of the two described earlier. On leaving, she went on to take up one of the options mentioned, a course at a local college of further education for two years. On leaving that, she was placed in a job at an old folks' home, washing up: so far, a success story in the transition from school-leaving to open employment. However, this change was only on one level. At home Gloria is very protected. She never goes shopping alone, never does the cooking. She is unable to handle money, tell the time or read simple instructions. All this need not have prevented her from continuing her job. However, a change of supervisor swiftly led to Gloria losing her job. She said she did not want 'no one telling me what to do'. After this episode she has been on other work experience placements, and, although she received favourable reports has not been offered a permanent job as her literacy is too poor.

2.10 Such experiences have implications for school-leaving programmes. Gloria probably benefited from the 'careers advice and information' element in that she got a job. However, the acquisition of another job was dependent on the 'general educational development' which would increase her literacy. This had not been achieved. The integration of different areas within the curriculum is of great importance. But maybe Gloria would not benefit from a heavier concentration on literacy skills. If the main aims of 'independence and self-sufficiency' are to be realized, then there should be a concentration on the 'social competence and personal development' area of the

programme. The problem with young people like Gloria is that there needs to be a concentration on all areas, as well as a strong school–home liaison which might encourage a change in parental attitude.

2.11 In this section I have outlined some approaches to school-leaving programmes. Very often the aims of these programmes are broad. There is considerable agreement on the need to place a high priority on 'social education' and 'living skills'. These laudable intentions, however, are too often frustrated by three factors which are explored at more length in the next section, namely the lack of future alternatives, confusion as to who should be doing what, and the blind adherence to a work ethic that sees 'having a job' as the only criterion for success.

3 *Post-school provision*

3.1 A survey carried out by Bob and Linda Tuckey in 1973 on the handicapped school-leaver gave evidence that further education or training was considered essential for the majority. Heads of special schools considered that 83 per cent of leavers would benefit from such programmes, but at that stage only 34 per cent were receiving any. Local authorities have a duty to provide education for handicapped people up to the age of 19, although this duty is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. For example, the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) discovered in 1981 that only one-third of LEAs provide education for mentally handicapped young people up to the age of nineteen. Not everybody is convinced that these programmes should be within schools and there has been a noticeable growth within the further education sector of an interest in the needs of handicapped school-leavers.

3.2 Post-school provision for handicapped school-leavers is extremely complicated. There are no generally agreed aims and objectives. There is no clear definition of statutory responsibility: at least three government departments—Employment, Health and Social Security, and Education and Science—are involved and yet there is little liaison. Funding is inconsistent and inadequate. There are innumerable schemes and projects, but they are not part of a nationwide plan. There is no agreement on terminology. There is no consensus on good practice. All these factors contribute to a picture that is confusing, complicated and less effective than it should be.

Education or training?

3.3 Take the terms 'education' and 'training'. They are often used synonymously, and, indeed, the dividing line between the two appears unclear and artificial. Usually, though, 'training' denotes the learning of specific skills, frequently for particular jobs, whereas 'education' is more general, often concentrating on the development of literacy and numeracy, as well as social skills. At first sight, then, it might seem logical to expect adult training centres (ATCs) to concentrate on specific skills programmes and further education colleges to engage in more general programmes. It might even seem sensible that the responsibility for such programmes might fall within the province of the Department of Employment and the Department of Education and Science respectively. One would expect that funding would fall comfortably into these two separate areas. One administrative framework would naturally acknowledge and liaise with the other, but there would be little overlap. But this would only be a bureaucratic formalizing of what is basically an artificial division. ATCs do not concentrate solely on specific skills programmes (their aims are discussed later); further education colleges do have work preparation courses funded by that branch of the Department of Employment known as the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). Lecturers and teachers are to be found in training centres just as there are instructors in colleges and schools: there is considerable overlap in the responsibilities of government departments, but little understanding of how to co-ordinate. Employers are prone to emphasize social skills more than technical skills when considering taking on handicapped young people, so that so-called educational

courses can be more vocational than so-called training courses. There is the potential for friction between instructors in training centres and lecturers in colleges, who, although in many instances doing similar work, are on very different pay and conditions of service. And so on.

3.4 The second factor contributing to the jumbled picture of post-school provision is the strong belief that all courses, whether designated 'educational' or 'training', should lead to a job. One of the initial questions asked in a casual encounter with someone is, 'What do you do?' A job gives adult status, and community acceptance. This is again another factor in the 'childlike' syndrome discussed elsewhere. If you are a man in this society at present, if you haven't a job, and have never had a job, then you can scarcely be a full participant in society.

Work preparation courses

3.5 North Nottinghamshire College of Further Education has been a pioneer in the development of a Work Orientation Unit (WOU). Some 150 young people whose handicaps range from physical, to sensory, to intellectual, to behavioural, are offered programmes designed to meet their specific needs. For some this will mean attendance on a normal course with only limited support (level 1) from the WOU, for others modified courses in the normal further education provision require more support (level 2), but the majority spend the bulk of their time within the WOU. The unit is mainly concerned with vocational training in a simulated industrial environment. The students learn appropriate work skills, such as clocking in, and this is complemented by a programme encouraging social development, such as personal hygiene, homecraft, current affairs, and general education (Clegg, 1979; Hutchinson, 1979).

3.6 The Bridgend Industrial Unit is another place which concentrates on teaching work skills and attitudes. Established in 1975, the unit provides for 'slow learners' who are characterized by 'poor linguistic abilities, an inability to recognise non-verbal cues, social maladroitness, poor self concept, an inability to relate harmoniously even with their peers, lack of confidence, poor role expectancy, inability to manage personal affairs and so on' (Browne, 1979). The answer to all this is to concentrate on work so that 'young people may be taught . . . how to progress towards the competent and independent life style to which most people aspire'. The programme is not unlike that of North Nottinghamshire College. There are three elements: work (which is usually manual, involving the use of machines), social learning (getting on with other people at work), and literacy and numeracy. The unit intends to produce young people who are employable and, as Browne thinks unemployability is a result of lack of social rather than academic skills, then the emphasis is on social maturity. A profile of a student will include an assessment of motivation, which includes an analysis of the individual's ability to stick to a task, as well as his success and speed in completing a task.

3.7 Another recent appearance is courses aimed at the development of job seeking skills. This can have particular significance for handicapped young people who are not necessarily experienced or knowledgeable in the techniques for finding jobs or in selling their abilities at interview. One such programme for blind people is described thus: 'The primary objective of the job-seeking skills programme is to help blind people recognize their skills and how they can be used in competitive employment, then teach them effective contemporary ways to independently look for and obtain a job' (Dickson, 1979). Such a programme includes form-filling, mock interviews, and skill identification techniques.

3.8 These approaches have their attractions. They are commonsensical, geared to the needs of society as it now appears. 'Having a job' is accepted as being a good thing. Given that certain skills are desirable, programmes are devised to provide the skills. The limitation is that many young people are now having much greater difficulty finding a job, including the handicapped. The handicapped have always had problems, sometimes because of the nature of their handicap, sometimes because they have no desire to get a job, sometimes because there are no opportunities. But the economic situation has reduced the number of jobs for everyone, with little hope of improvement. Work preparation courses to some extent cover themselves by offering some general and

social education. And in fact North Nottinghamshire College has gone to the length of developing a course entitled 'Significant living without work'. So the hard work-oriented curriculum may be fraying at the edges.

Adult training centres

3.9 The ATCs are also displaying a growing belief that not only does employment require skills that are not specifically related to the job, but that there are other activities worth preserving that are peripheral to having a job. ATCs are the principal community-based provision for mentally handicapped adults, ostensibly intended to provide education and work training for people living in the community.

3.10 There are over 400 ATCs throughout the country, attended by over 40,000 mentally handicapped adults. Although the number of places has grown considerably, from 23,000 in 1969 to 38,500 in 1977, there is still a great shortage of places for school-leavers, which has meant that recently schools have had to keep young people on beyond 16 because the only alternative was to be at home all the time.

3.11 But although ATCs provide 'a place to go', it is not clear that they live up to their name, which suggests that their function is to train people for something. Ed Whelan and Barbara Speake conducted a national survey of ATCs in 1974 and discovered that they looked on 'work training' as one of their main aims (Whelan and Speake, 1977). Yet the survey also revealed that over a number of years, only four per cent of trainees had left for open employment, and 0.4 per cent for sheltered employment. For most people, then, ATCs provide permanent 'training'. And of the small number who did leave for open employment only a third had been trained for a job similar to the job they left to do.

3.12 The work that trainees actually do has given cause for concern amongst a number of commentators, although there are suggestions that things are changing. Many ATCs' bread and butter is provided by unskilled contract work. Whelan and Speake found that 63 per cent of trainees were engaged in work that did not require the use of tools, such as packing, sorting and labelling, or work that needed only simple hand tools.

3.13 Beresford and Tuckwell (1978) painted a grim picture of the exploitation of workers in ATCs, subtitling their piece 'If monkeys were treated like this there would be a national outcry'. They were appalled at what they found:

> Here we have mentally handicapped workers paid £2 and £3 and sometimes less for a 27 or 30 hour week. This is a world where snapping wheels on to a toy tractor all day is described as 'of great therapeutic value', and where trainees have to sift one by one through a mountain of drawing pins to check each tip.

3.14 They conclude by saying that this approach to providing occupation for mentally handicapped young people is a:

> gross misrepresentation of the capabilities of mentally handicapped people who are a heterogeneous group with a wide range of aptitudes and abilities. The tradition of low expectations of the mentally handicapped arises from the unstimulating regimes of the old subnormality hospitals, rather than from any inherent incapacity of their own.

3.15 The National Development Group for the mentally handicapped produced a pamphlet on *Day Services for the Mentally Handicapped* in 1977 in which they made a number of recommendations about ATCs, among which was the proposal to change their name to 'social education centres', and to describe people attending them as students. Of course, the idea behind the name was to encourage ATCs as places where education on a wider scale would continue where schools left off. A number of ATCs are being developed as social education centres with an emphasis on the acquisition of 'life skills'. This is not necessarily non-vocational. The ability to cope with everyday problems, the ability to take instructions and to get on with fellow workers are all employable attributes. But social education is wider than the training for a job. It reflects the aims spelt out earlier in the school-leaver programmes, those of greater independence and self-sufficiency. Some areas have special annexes for the school-leavers, others organize their centres so that the programmes offer progress until open employment is achieved.

A trainee at an adult training centre is taught a specific skill that can have general application.

3.16 Still others are sited in a complex that includes a day centre and a sheltered workshop, so that the handicapped have access to a range of options. Programmes can include recreational pursuits, such as pottery, woodwork and sewing, and then filter into more vocational matters such as light assembly work and bench work. More centres are becoming involved in devising courses at different levels, so that not only are young people with different abilities challenged, they also have the potential to develop new skills.

3.17 ATCs crystallize the two main themes referred to at the beginning of this section. Many have progressed from the Beresford and Tuckwell image of zoo-like work mills to adopting objectives that would not look out of place in a college of further education, and yet there is still no national pattern of co-ordinated development. But many are still tied rigidly to a work regime in which work is 'good' in itself and in a strange way gives 'dignity' to living.

Further education

3.18 Further education is perhaps less of a muddle as it has a recognized field of work on which to build.

Reading You should now read 'Special provision in post-school education' by John Panckhurst, in the Reader (Reading 3.6). This article concentrates only on physically handicapped school-leavers, paying particular attention to the availability of more advanced courses, including quite lengthy sections on higher education.

Types of course

3.19 Work preparation and work experience courses are not the only kinds available in further education, although it would be fair to say that the bulk of courses have work preparation as an underlying theme. Here is a summary of types of courses available:

(a) *Link and bridging courses* These are usually between the special school-leaving class and the local college of further education. The arrangements are very varied, for

example one college will lay on a special programme for a half-day a week, another will deliberately introduce the school-leaver to regular classes on a regular basis. The purpose is to introduce young people to a bigger world and also to provide experience that might guide their thinking on what they wish to do after leaving school. Bridging courses are occasionally used to prepare for entering a more vocational course. Such courses would tend to be designed for specific handicaps; physically handicapped and deaf youngsters have been obvious targets.

(b) *Special courses* The courses at North Nottinghamshire and Bridgend Colleges of Further Education have been outlined above. Courses are usually vocational, concentrating on manual work, but with a strong emphasis on the development of social skills. Some colleges have these courses running in separate units, as at Airedale and Wharfedale. Bridgend College of Technology provides a purpose-built residential hostel for physically handicapped students.

Students with sensory handicaps very often have their own network of school and post-school programmes. This can have advantages: the traditionally educated blind person will have had a version of grammar-school education with exam opportunities. This will encourage the more able to go on to higher education. There are many very competent blind people holding down responsible jobs who have come by this route. For others, it can be restricting in that social and emotional experience has been dominated by a blind-only society. Even after school it is noticeable how blind people maintain contact with their old school friends and still mix in a mainly blind society. For deaf people this phenomenon is more pronounced. Communication by sign limits contact to those who can understand sign—usually other deaf people. Communication by voice, particularly where their enunciation is poor, can also isolate deaf people from the general community. The deaf, more than the blind, are forced into each other's company by society's reluctance to develop communication skills. However, neither group is totally excluded from non-handicapped society. There are post-school courses that encourage attendance at ordinary colleges. Brixton College of Further Education, for example, has been running courses for both partially hearing and partially sighted students for many years. Other colleges are following suit. North London Polytechnic provides a social work for the deaf course and encourages deaf students to apply. The City Literary Institute in London provides courses for hearing people to learn sign and courses for deaf people as an introduction to regular further education.

Physically handicapped school-leavers have a growing opportunity to attend ordinary further education, but there are still specialist residential colleges, often acting as bridges to regular courses. Hereward College in Coventry, established in 1971, is the best known, and has developed close ties with its sister college, Tile Hill College of Further Education, so that joint courses have been successfully run. Such colleges are finding that their role is changing as only the more severely handicapped young person is now ineligible for ordinary further education. This will put increasing pressure on the curriculum and is causing considerable rethinking of a traditional further education vocational approach.

(c) *Adjusted normal courses* Physically handicapped students in particular have often been able to participate in ordinary courses, with the only concessions made to them being the provision of ramps or adapted toilets.

(d) *Outreach* Some colleges have taken on the responsibility for providing education outside their own establishments. The secondment of lecturers as part of their teaching commitment is becoming quite a common feature of the relationship between colleges, adult education centres, day centres and hospitals. This development has immense potential for both young school-leavers and adults and needs to be recognized at both local and national level as a viable and relatively cheap form of providing continuing education for those to whom traditional vocational further education is irrelevant.

3.20 The range and type of provision is, then, wide and varied. But again, basic questions have to be asked of each type of course. What need are they meeting? Who identified the need? Are the courses in any way reflecting young people's aspirations? Are those aspirations realizable?

3.21 Courses get established for a variety of reasons, such as the personal beliefs of a local councillor, the arguments posed by a special school head, parental pressure, or an individual perceiving a problem and seeking to solve it. The method of establishing a course is similarly varied. It helps to get the principal or head of department at the

School leavers being assessed for entry into a college of further education.

college of further education closely involved. They have the political muscle to argue for and get funding. As Panckhurst puts it, 'without the backing from principal or vice principal, the co-ordinator for handicapped students or the lecturer in charge of special courses is not in a good position to sustain the quality of the provision or to initiate new developments'. This person's support is much more important than that of the local advisers or inspectorate. This can be a weakness as advisers and inspectors should be able to offer guidance or reference to other courses being held in other parts of the region. As it is there are very few further education inspectors interested and very few special education inspectors with the appropriate knowledge of further education. One group of lecturers in the ILEA felt at sea because of the inspectors' lack of initiative and have formed their own self-help group to offer support, advice, and some rationalization of provision. That sort of group is obviously useful but represents a survival tactic. Expertise over a wider field is greatly needed.

3.22 The admissions policies adopted by many colleges who run special courses are often of interest. One of the most frequent reasons given by a college for refusing an

applicant is that he or she would not benefit from the course. I go back to the questions asked earlier. How has need been perceived and who has done the perceiving? One of the dangers of what in general would seem to be an admirable growth in the provision of courses for handicapped young people is that such courses are in the mould of other traditional further education courses. In other words, 'the course rules OK'. If the potential student does not fit the course then it's bad luck. But two young people with apparently similar handicaps do not necessarily have the same needs. Further education is usually very happy to see 'needs' in terms of what they offer rather than what the young people actually do need. Very few colleges actually recognize a problem and attempt to build a course that is student, rather than course material, based.

3.23 In a wider context, the Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit (FEU) has recognized this. A document entitled *Unified Vocational Preparation* (FEU, 1978) argues for a project that is:

> part of the broad aim of giving young people a fair start in working life. Initial vocational preparation should assist young people:
>
> i to assess their potential and think realistically about jobs and careers;
>
> ii to develop the basic skills which will be needed in adult life generally;
>
> iii to understand their society and how it works;
>
> iv to strengthen the foundation of skill and knowledge on which further education and training can be built.

3.24 On the surface, this is all the usual good, well-meaning stuff. But it goes further than most curricula, not just in recognizing that vocational training is not only about getting a job, but also in the way it suggests of setting the course up. This course is to be student-based, in that a young person does not enrol for a course, but a group of young people is identified locally, and a course designed to meet their particular needs. An excellent example of this is the Notting Hill project run by Chris Webb in London. Black, unqualified, unemployed school-leavers are being taught computer technology and simple programming. The aim is to attract potential employers by showing them the demonstrable skills of the young people. Although in its infancy, the scheme has attracted considerable interest as well as offers from employers.

3.25 Other FEU publications are equally pertinent to the plight of the handicapped school-leaver. One such is *The Basis for Choice* (1979), which recognizes the confusion in the minds of staff and students as to the aims and purposes of non-examination courses. This again advises a concentration on need and encourages an approach that offers options and trains the student to review these options and make choices in the light of experience and reflection. This course is aimed at eventual employment, but the rationale is entirely appropriate for young people for whom getting a job might not be the most important option.

3.26 Student need is a common factor in these two curriculum reviews. As always, the problem is devising courses to respond to that particular need. However, many colleges have not even got that far and have devised a curriculum modelled on traditional further education curricula, course-based and exam-oriented. I am going to explore two curricula that attempt to respond to need.

The college curriculum

3.27 I commented on the difficulty of analysing student need, and of translating that into a curriculum that can be flexible enough to respond to the individual student. Case study 37, 'After school: further education for handicapped adolescents', offers two contrasting examples that attempt this.

Reading Now read the second part of Case study 37, 'Ordinary FE college: curriculum for ESN(M) and ESN(S) school-leavers' (from p. 264). This curriculum is set out in the form of diagrams and tables. Each diagram breaks an area of life down into a series of events and tasks which people have to learn to cope with. In each of these contexts a number of specific skills is taught, exemplified in Table 1 of the case study.

Comment (a) This curriculum has a number of advantages. It offers detailed guidance as to what to teach; it is large enough to adapt flexibly to individual young people; it develops skills progressively; it permits fairly straightforward assessment directly related to teaching, and provides for easy record-keeping.

(b) Even so, it does not answer or provide guidance on some important questions. Clearly there is insufficient time to cover everything in all the contexts described so some selection has to be made. But how are priorities to be established? Secondly, although the curriculum allows for individualized teaching, this also depends on the resources available. It would be impracticable to have a group of students with just one lecturer, spread around the town, working on different skills in different contexts, so how could this be resolved?

Activity 1 The case study gives an example of the checklist designed to match the diagram of the college and classroom programme. There are four other diagrams available that complete the curriculum. Take Figure 3, on 'relationships', and make a list of items that you think could come under this heading. What problems do you encounter in doing this?

Comment (a) The first problem with an exercise like this is that the young people who will follow the curriculum are not personally known to you. Does this make the exercise difficult or even impossible? If so, what is the value of the 'high-level' planning?

(b) You may have found your list growing impossibly long. If so, how would you narrow it down? In doing so, you would have to take decisions about what skills you considered more *valuable* than others.

(c) You could easily find your list containing conflicting skills. For example, should these young people be taught to be assertive and self-confident with all people? In some circumstances, such skills could be a positive problem, as in encounters with the police.

(d) Your list may have covered only readily identifiable skills that can be checked, such as 'recognizes a police officer's uniform' or 'brushes hair every morning'. But these skills are scarcely the key to social success. How is one to teach sensitivity or how to get on with people? Can and should these abilities be reduced to a series of specific exercises and taught? Unit 5/6 and Unit 12 will discuss such behavioural teaching techniques.

3.28 The problem with this curriculum is that it leaves many of the important questions unanswered. These questions have to do with the values on which we base an education. For example, the chart on relationships include the word 'masturbation', but this gives no guidance at all as to how the college deals with this topic. Does it teach people to avoid masturbation, that it is undesirable; or does it teach students that masturbation provides a good way out for the timid and insecure; or that it is the way many people find out about their own sexuality?

3.29 A curriculum cannot simply be reduced to a list of skills, particularly at a stage when mentally handicapped students and slow learners are beginning to think for themselves about what they want to do, and about what is right and wrong. But even if we do reduce the curriculum to a set of skills, there are far too many to teach in the time available. Which we select will also depend on our values.

3.30 The next example tries to grasp this nettle and sets a curriculum within the context of our society in which attitudes towards employment, leisure, money and the quality of life is slowly but fundamentally changing.

Reading Now read the first part of Case study 37, 'A learning framework for cerebral palsied school leavers'.

Comment (a) This curriculum is based on a very different idea about handicapped young people's needs. Here, it is said, their greatest needs are to be recognized and accepted. But, since *they* do not do the recognizing and accepting, how far is this *their* need, and how far can they meet the need themselves?

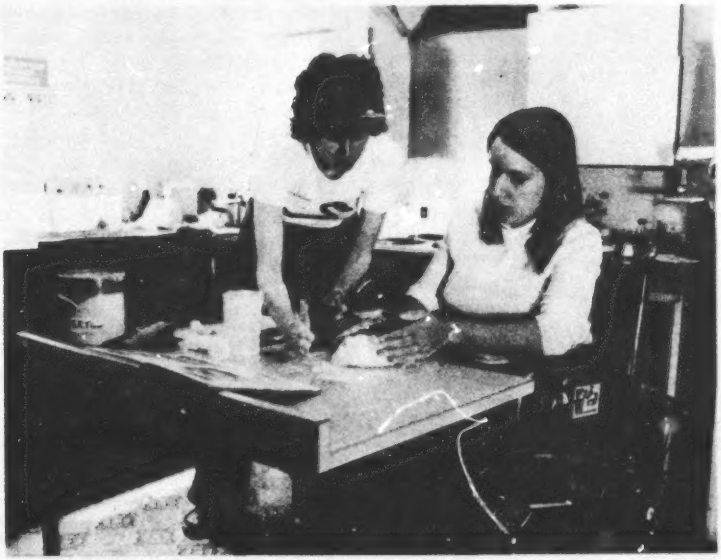
(b) The studio session's principle purposes appear to be to reveal the student's own feelings and attitudes towards their handicap, and to pull them out of believing that

things will be done to them, rather than them having to do things for themselves. Both these aims are important, but to what extent will anything achieved in the studio apply to the outside world?

(c) The drama curriculum could be accused of being nebulous and unrelated to the harsh reality of coping in the world. In response, it could be said it provides individuals with an unconstrained opportunity to say what they think, and to consider issues that could easily be kept quiet. Could it be that the action that follows is equally important for these young people? How much of that action should be their own responsibility?

(d) It is said in this curriculum that 'what is needed is a scrutiny of the real needs of adolescents in the final years of schooling, links with continued education and community-based activities and greater access to more appropriate provision'. Does this curriculum provide an answer, or part of an answer to this need? In the conclusion to the unit I will return to this vital quotation, and the extent to which various measures meet 'the real needs of adolescents'.

Here a student at an assessment and further education centre learns about make up as part of her independence programme.



Another student learns cookery.

The careers service

3.31 Perhaps one should not be very surprised at the emphasis placed on vocational courses when one recognizes that the careers service is the main referral agency for handicapped school-leavers. John Panckhurst (1980) observed that of ten colleges he studied, nine relied heavily on careers officers' recommendations as a criterion for admission. The careers service has been recognized again and again as a crucial link between school-leaver, parent, employer or further education or training opportunities. The Warnock Committee recommended that this multi-faceted role be recorded as the 'named person' who would act as the young person's contact with the myriad of agencies available. Many careers officers felt that this was impractical given their present caseload, and, indeed, the government White Paper (1980) put this proposal out of court.

3.32 According to the Careers Service Advisory Council the careers officer has the following functions:

(a) to work with careers staff in schools and colleges in providing pupils and students with information on educational and employment opportunities;

(b) to give vocational guidance to pupils and students in their later years in education;

(c) to help school-leavers and other young people to find suitable employment and/or training;

(d) to follow up the progress of young people in employment and give them any further help or advice they need;

(e) to establish close links with industry and the agencies of the MSC.

3.33 The service has very close relations with the education department, and is indeed administered locally by LEAs, although formally it is ultimately responsible to the Department of Employment.

3.34 Virtually all authorities have, within their careers team, a specialist careers officer with responsibility for handicapped school-leavers. This includes those from special schools, as well as, often, those referred by colleagues from ordinary schools who have identifiable handicaps. The Warnock Report advised on the ratio of school population to careers officers and suggested 50,000 school children to one specialist officer. Some authorities' ratio is already better than this, so this suggestion was not particularly

welcome. In fact, authorities have their own methods of deploying their specialists and this reflects on caseload. In her book *What Sort of Life*, Patricia Rowan (1980) gives a breakdown of the organization and caseload in nine LEAs, shown in Table 1. The caseload varies from 180 to 300. The way that work is approached will be even more variable depending upon local educational provision and the employment market.

Table 1 Specialist careers officers in the nine LEAS—organization and caseloads.

LEA	School population	Specialist careers officers	Caseload
Cheshire	200 000	1 (+ part-time help from 8 liaison officers in districts)	250
Hampshire	258 400	3	200 each
Hounslow	35 000	1	180
Leeds	134 000	2 (one with administrative duties)	300
Lothian	121 000	1 (+ part-time help from 8 semi-specialists in areas)	200
Mid Glamorgan	111 000	1	200
Newcastle upon Tyne	54 000	2	125 each
Nottinghamshire	180 000	3	250 each (including 100 normal each)
Somerset	60 000	1 (+ part-time help from area careers officers)	200

Source: Rowan, 1980, p. 57.

3.35 A specialist careers officer should visit a school in the fourth year for a general introductory talk. In the fifth year he will have individual interviews. These will be at the school, but they can be linked to home visits so that parents are fully involved. The careers officer very often will be the intermediary. However, his main task is then to sell the abilities of the young person to a prospective employer. The goal is getting a job. At times this is pursued whatever the cost. For instance, Patricia Rowan describes one careers officer's technique:

> . . . MSC Youth Opportunities has made it easier now to twist the employer's conscience if he is looking for work experience, since under the programme they won't lose money. More often than not his candidates are kept on in a permanent job. They prove themselves or become the firm mascot, or the employer hasn't the heart to sack them.
>
> (Rowan, 1980, p. 63)

3.36 Many employers and schools believe that handicapped adolescents' employability in anything but the most sheltered of environments is unrealistic. Even a more progressive special careers officer says 'any scheme of post-school education for the handicapped which does not have as its principle aim improving the employability of these people and boosting their chances of success when at work, will be of little value' (Kent, 1979).

3.37 Patricia Rowan gives examples of typical cases in the life of a specialist careers officer. Here is a condensed version of one such case:

> *Y* is agoraphobic and is extremely nervous of crowds or open spaces. The difficulty started when she was 14, she is now (at the time of report) 18 years old.
>
> She was interviewed and given various tests on which she scored above average intelligence. She expressed an interest in horticulture or agricultural work or social work. She scored very low on interest in and aptitude for work with sales/clerical involvement. She was shown a preparation for hospital service course and certificate in office studies course (COSC). She was also encouraged to go along to a local PHAB (physically handicapped–able bodied) Club.
>
> The local technical college agreed to accept her on a COSC course, and she sought Training Opportunities Programme (TOPS) sponsorship. The Training Services Division were unwilling to help and suggested an Employment

Rehabilitation Centre. The careers officer thought this unsuitable. *Y* had developed over the six months at work and was no longer talking in monosyllables. The Training Services Division changed its mind and *Y* duly enrolled, sponsored by TOPS. Three months later the careers officer visited the college and was encouraged by *Y*'s attitude. She was planning to go on to an OND (Ordinary National Diploma) in business studies.

(adapted from Rowan, 1980, pp. 66–8)

3.38 Several interesting points emerge from this brief case study. The first is the complexity of the bureaucracy careers officers have to master. (I shall be giving more details about this in the next section). The second is the amount of time they have to be prepared to spend to help one young person. For example, this successful placement took the best part of a year to set up and still is not finished until *Y* is settled in a job. The third is that the courses available are not always immediately suitable to meet the young person's aspirations. In this case it worked out, although *Y*'s initial preference was, ironically, for outdoor work.

3.39 A careers officer's job, then, is primarily to get the right training opportunity that can lead to a job, or to direct a school-leaver to the right job. However, some officers are beginning to see wider implications. There is a growing awareness that a career can mean more than just having a job. As Baranyay (1976) puts it, 'if modern ideas of training and rehabilitation emphasized "how to live" rather than only "how to work" there would be far happier and more effective results'. The careers officer who initiated *Y*'s successful transfer into the local technical college clearly recognized this when he visited her and found her doing well in her course, but thought the 'best news' was the presence of a steady boyfriend and support from her parents for this relationship. It may be that *Y* will not get a job in the formal sense, but will set up home. The careers officer would see that assuredly as a successful outcome. A further step along this pathway is outlined by Brolin and D'Alonzo (1979): 'For many handicapped individuals, paid employment will not necessarily be a major part of their career. These individuals will need to know how to function adequately in vocational, family and civic pursuits in order to lead satisfying, meaningful and productive lives. This, in essence, is their career.' The move by a few careers officers to become involved in the post-school activities of very severely handicapped young people is an indication that this wider definition of careers has some currency.

The Manpower Services Commission

3.40 The MSC was established in 1974 under the auspices of the Department of Employment to fund courses that will lead to employment. In particular, the creation of the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) in 1978 recognized the need for school-leavers to receive more training that is job oriented. The high and continuing rise in the unemployment of school-leavers between 1978 and 1981 did not herald government sponsorship of schemes providing alternatives to jobs, but a further injection of cash for more 'training for jobs' programmes.

3.41 YOP courses, while not specifically for handicapped youngsters, nevertheless have been used to develop a wide range of courses in which handicapped school-leavers have received training: as one specialist careers officer put it: 'One of the greatest single measures that came along'.

3.42 Further education colleges have taken up these options with a will. Patricia Rowan (1980) set out the sort of courses offered under the auspices of the YOP (Table 2). Courses vary in length from two weeks to a year—some may be even longer. As can be seen, by no means all are held in colleges of further education. Not unnaturally courses offering work experience are based at places of work, whereas work preparation courses may be at skillcentres, employers' establishments or at training colleges. In applying for MSC funding, those proposing a course emphasize that one of its aims would be to release its students to some sort of full-time job.

Table 2 Youth Opportunities Programme: summary of schemes available.

Types of opportunity	Name of scheme	Objective	Duration	Provider and location	Progression
Courses to train and prepare young people for work	Assessment and employment induction courses	Improve young people's employability by assessing work they are most suited for and interested in, improving their knowledge of the world of work, and improving basic social skills	Most 2 weeks	Mainly employers' establishments. Also TSD skill centres and colleges of further education	Some to normal employment. Most to basic skill courses. Some to a work experience opportunity. A few to further education
	Short training courses	Training for a specific, though broad, occupational area up to operator or semi-skilled level	About 13 weeks	TSD skill centres, colleges of further education, employers' establishments	Many to normal employment. Some to further education or a work experience opportunity
	Remedial and preparatory courses	Participants should reach basic levels of literacy and numeracy and basic entry requirements for other opportunities	As long as necessary for individual to achieve objective	Colleges of further education, special schools. Residential training colleges	Most to other opportunities in programme. A few to normal employment
Work experience	Employers' premises	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work on employers' premises	On average 6 months	Employers' premises	Many to normal employment. Others to work preparation course or further education
	Project-based	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work through the medium of projects	6–12 months	Various sponsors including local authorities, voluntary organizations etc.	Most to normal employment. Others to work preparation course or further education
	Training workshop	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work in a work group producing goods or services	6–12 months	Various sponsors as above using vacant factories and other premises or sites	Many to normal employment
	Community service	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work through the medium of local community activities	6–12 months	Social services voluntary organizations. Specific community projects	Most to normal employment. Others to work preparation courses or further education

Note: TSD stands for the Training Services Division, one of the arms of the MSC. The other arm is the Employment Service Division (ESD).

Source: Rowan, 1980, pp. 75–6.

Whose responsibility?

3.43 The provisions I have described in this section are complicated by the bureaucracies that control them. For children at least up to the age of 16, it is clear that their education and the resources for it are the responsibility of the LEA. After they reach 16, this is not so. Further education colleges are controlled by the LEA, adult training centres by the local social services department, but MSC courses, such as those in the YOP, are administered by the Department of Employment. However this came about, it often leads to demarcation disputes and confusion as to who is doing what. Moreover, funds for courses are given when institutions stick to official guidelines: defining a course as 'educational' or 'training' affects its eligibility for resources, and young people are left in limbo while the bureaucrats squabble. As Margaret Morgan of the Spastics Society puts it, 'It is not uncommon for a youngster to be lost for a couple of years in this "no-man's land" between the bureaucratic frontiers' (Morgan, 1964).

4 *Employment*

Jobs

4.1 The Warnock Committee commissioned a survey to find out about job prospects for handicapped school-leavers. The picture painted is depressing.

> Handicapped young people are in general a disadvantaged minority in the labour market, they have access to a very restricted range of jobs, they frequently work in poor conditions, in dirty, noisy repetitive jobs; but most importantly in the current economic climate, they are more likely than the non-handicapped to be unemployed and have difficulty in finding a job.
>
> (Walker, in press)

4.2 Walker, who analysed the data produced by the study, compared handicapped with non-handicapped school-leavers in type of employment, level of employment, and conditions of employment. He found that, on leaving school, only 54 per cent of the physically handicapped, 71 per cent of the ESN(M) and 70 per cent of the maladjusted got jobs, as compared to 82 per cent of the non-handicapped (Walker, 1980, p. 214). Handicapped employees were less likely to go into professional/clerical jobs than their non-handicapped peers, and were more likely to be in industrial manual work. The careers service did not come particularly well out of this. Handicapped young people were *less* likely to have talked to careers officers or teachers than their non-handicapped peers, which may seem surprising. But those who were stably employed, that is those who had held down a job for most of the time since leaving school, were more likely to have received guidance and support from the careers service. Walker also found that handicapped young people were less likely to have a careers teacher in the school. 'Nearly two-thirds of handicapped and over half of non-handicapped young people either had no careers teacher at their school, or had not spoken to the careers teacher about their future'. This finding is very surprising given that special schools are placing increasing importance on school-leaving programmes. One simple explanation may be that the school-leaving form teacher is not known as the careers teacher, although that should be a major part of the form teacher's job. Or these figures may indicate a serious lack of provision.

4.3 About unemployment, Walker is equally discouraging:

> . . . Some three-fifths of unemployed disabled young people under 25 are out of work for up to 13 weeks, compared with one half of their non-disabled peers—and one quarter of them are unemployed for more than 52 weeks compared with just under one tenth of the non-disabled.
>
> (Walker, 1980, p. 220)

Walker (supported by Linda and Bob Tuckey, 1973) also considers that employment is the most difficult to find in the first few months after school, but this period is the most important for a handicapped school-leaver, if they are to achieve a pattern of regular stable employment. Walker points the finger at careers officers in particular for their lack of involvement with special school-leavers, arguing that they should stress 'preparation for employment and also unemployment rather than simple occupational decision-making'.

4.4 There are regional variations in the national trend. A local survey in Cambridgeshire by McLoughlin and Kent (1979) concluded that 'most of the respondents seem to have adapted well to, and be coping adequately with, the demands of work'. Admittedly their survey is very small in comparison to Walker (78 surveyed, 40 respondents) and is very localized (leavers from two special schools over a three year period). Level of job turnover was low (again in contrast to Walker) and job satisfaction high. 'The overall impression is that the respondents are happy in their work and succeeding in it.' Few of the respondents had used either the facilities of the Employment Services Division or local advertisements to find jobs, in spite of both these avenues being dealt with at length in their school-leaver programmes. A minority (27 per cent) also commented that their experience of work was different to that which they had expected. Both these latter points have significance for the planning of school-leaver programmes.

4.5 Having a job is still seen as the normal thing. Money isn't necessarily the prime factor. The sense of being normal and of belonging are as important. One young man was apathetic and lacking in ambition after a car accident. 'I didn't have any sort of ambitions to work at that time . . . but I felt bored doing nothing during the day except lying around watching the telly and listening to the radio.' He goes on to explain what having a job does and does not do for him:

> I'm working at a loss financially. Before, I was getting £50 a week on social security, and now I must be out of pocket by around £30 a week at least. When I first started thinking about going back to work, I had to say to myself, 'Where the hell are you going to be in five years' time? You're going to be on the same money, living on the poverty line with precious little increments from social security, and here you are dreaming about fast cars, fast women and big houses. You might as well get off your bum and do something about it!' And so if it means putting up with less money for a few years, I don't really mind at all, because it's got to be worthwhile in the end . . . I enjoy work . . you know, it's the company, you meet all the different people—I mean, I must know two dozen people quite well now who I didn't know before. They treat me just like any other person at work now. They were a bit apprehensive at first, and didn't know whether I wanted to talk about my accident or anything and were really a bit scared. But now, they'll take the mickey out of me just as much as anyone else.

4.6 Not all young people in jobs have the resilience and the social competence to cope with the usual in-jokes and mickey taking. The young man quoted in section 2 felt that mickey taking had descended to name-calling and so he relied on the older women at the factory to offer him support and friendship rather than his peer group. A young woman, still at school, has not seriously considered what to do on leaving, except that she should be with her friends, who like her, are deaf. On the possibilities of marriage, she is similarly bound by her experience and expectations, as she expects to marry a deaf man, because 'a hearing boy might want a divorce from me because we might quarrel and fight'.

4.7 So much depends on the personality of the individual. If they are competitive, have a reasonable degree of confidence that allows them to stand up for themselves, and are realistic and practical in their ambitions, then there is a much better chance of a successful and stable career. People with epilepsy, who have been recognized by Disablement Resettlement Officers (DROs) as the 'most difficult single group to find jobs for' (Greaves and Massie, 1977), can successfully realize their aspirations if they have the determination and self confidence.

> Getting the job I do, bank clerk, was my seventh choice of job. All the jobs I had to mark off as I went down the list were either because I couldn't get a qualification or else I couldn't pass the medical. I wanted a job with a physical side to it. I went to the job centre and she said—sort of in the back of her mind—well, become a labourer, which was certainly no choice of mine at all. So I did it through my own reference. I enjoy working with figures, and that's why banking was a choice. I've been working at the bank now for 13 months and it's been great fun.

Employment bureaucracy

4.8 As with further education and training, there is a whole bureaucracy associated with the employment of disabled people. The MSC, as well as the Training Services Division (TSD), has an Employment Service Division (ESD). This division, in theory, works closely with the careers service, and its officers, the DROs, liaise with careers officers. The demarcation of responsibility is not always clear, but in general terms the careers officer is more involved with initial job placement and the DRO with succeeding jobs, as well as those who have become disabled during their working life and are seeking resettlement. There is an overlap between the two services, and this can be confusing, particularly as the client can go to the careers office or the ESD. DROs are normally part of the job centre team and are prepared to offer their services to any disabled person. They thus have experience of all age ranges and types of disability (with the exception of the blind who have their own Blind Persons Resettlement Officers—BPROs). This does

mean that the case loads tend to be dominated by those who are over 50 years of age and have acquired a disability during their adult life. Often the DRO is placed in the invidious position of deciding whether this group, difficult to place even if unhandicapped, takes priority over young handicapped people seeking, perhaps, their first or second jobs.

4.9 One of the main agencies through which DROs seek to prepare handicapped people for work is employment rehabilitation centres. There are some 26 of these and over 13,000 people pass through them annually. They are assessment and rehabilitation centres that aim to tailor courses to individual need. A course can vary in length from a few weeks to six months. They impose a work regime as far as possible and aim at providing a practical recommendation about the type of work most appropriate for the rehabilitee as quickly as possible. Some ERCs provide work preparation courses for school-leavers. Generally only those with good employment prospects will be taken, and those employment prospects should be within a fairly narrow band, covering industrial and commercial jobs. Severely handicapped young people from ESN(S) or the lower ranges of ESN(M) schools would not be able to cope, and the handicapped but bright individual would not be challenged. Other rehabilitation units are attached to hospitals, training centres, and, rarely, to employers' premises.

4.10 There is also a bureaucracy associated with the number of handicapped people getting a job. The Disabled Person's (Employment) Act 1944 established the disablement register and the quota, through which disabled people seeking work could register themselves with the Department of Employment. In the quota system, firms employing 20 or more people are legally obliged to employ as three per cent of their staff those who are registered as disabled. However, very few firms have done this, and in recent years the number of disabled people registering has gone down, so that one might find a company employing more disabled people than it was legally obliged to, but because few or none of them were registered, be shown as employing less than the quota. Patricia Rowan (1980) has set out reasons for and against registration (Table 3).

Table 3 Advantages and disadvantages of the disablement register.

For	Against
1 Enables access to specialized help of DROs	1 They already have this access unofficially
2 Registration enables person to be considered for sheltered workshops	2 There are very few vacancies in sheltered workshops anyway
3 Registered person may benefit from assisted travel scheme	3 They may be eligible for mobility allowance anyway
4 Loan of employment aids such as special typewriters	4 No argument against this useful provision
5 Loan to set up in own business	5 Unlikely that young person will need loan
6 Registered person may gain employment under a quota system or through job introduction scheme	6 Many employers view the quota system with suspicion and are already prejudiced against the employment of disabled people, in spite of the new RSD 'positive policies' approach to employers
7 Registration would ensure that the MSC was fully aware of the true magnitude of the problem and their responsibilities towards registered persons	7 Registration may lower the morale of young people without improving employment prospects

Source: Rowan, 1980, p. 80.

4.11 The fact that many disabled people are increasingly reluctant to register themselves suggests that the supposed benefits were illusory. Registration itself may harm the handicapped through the overt declaration of stigma. Greaves and Massie (1979) state this case persuasively. 'We strongly oppose the introduction of a compulsory register because we consider that the disabled person should be encouraged to stress his abilities rather than his disabilities, but without compulsion we fail to see how the system can be more rigidly enforced and be fair to all.' The MSC reviewed the system in 1981, and proposed to make the employers' part in it voluntary (MSC, 1981).

Alternatives to open employment

4.12 Up to now I have only considered employment within the ordinary fields of work available to all people, i.e. open employment. Many employers have been sympathetic and positive in employing handicapped people. Some disabled people have particular advantages, for instance deaf people in a noisy factory shop, but for the most part employers have to make adaptations or arrangements that take into account the nature of the disability. Where structural alterations are needed, such as widening doors or making toilets accessible, the Department of Employment can offer grants. Some firms are increasingly prepared to view disabled applicants favourably, as there is growing evidence that disabled workers are more conscientious, work harder and take less time off than able-bodied workers (Kettle, 1979). Organizations such as the British Computer Society have set up groups to investigate ways in which disabled people could be employed in particular fields. However, the majority still prefer to fall back on stock excuses, such as insurance cover, fire hazards and non-acceptance by fellow workers, as reasons for their unwillingness to employ disabled people. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1978 has in fact contributed to the unwillingness of employers to employ disabled people for fear of contravening it.

4.13 In recent years there has been the development of 'enclave' employment. A group of disabled people works under special supervision in a normal factory or business, so that they are in an environment as near to open employment as possible, but they are sheltered by being employed by the local social services, which invoices the firm for work completed. The potential advantage is that it allows disabled people to work near their homes in a relatively normal work environment. However, the disadvantages are the reluctance of local authorities to become involved in business operations and the complicated relationship between the social services and the ESD.

4.14 Another method of introducing handicapped people to work has been the Pathway Scheme. Originating in South Wales and sponsored by the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children, it pairs a mentally handicapped young person with an able-bodied worker so that personal and practical support is immediately available. Social integration of young workers is every bit as important as their development of work skills—their ability to joke and take jokes with non-handicapped fellow workers is essential to preparing for stable placements.

4.15 The name most often used for institutions that employ disabled adults is 'sheltered workshop'. But in terms of sponsorship, regime and type and level of work, sheltered

Dorincourt Industries at Leatherhead provides sheltered employment either as a permanent placement, or a step towards open work. This workshop specializes in hand decorated ceramics and assembly work.

workshops vary enormously. The major government-sponsored organization is Remploy. Over 66 per cent of disabled people working in sheltered employment work for Remploy. In round figures that is some 8000 people. However, the average age of the work force (45 for men, 38 for women) indicates that it is very hard for young people to get taken on. Remploy is run as a commercial organization and is concerned with profitability. It takes employees whose handicaps do not markedly slow down the production process: '. . . the emphasis in a Remploy factory is on open employment under conditions as near to normal as possible rather than on medical care and rehabilitation.' Voluntary organizations offer the young school-leaver more chance of entry. Village settlements such as those at Papworth, in Cambridgeshire, and Camphill, near Aberdeen, offer the chance of becoming part of a community as well as being employed. Severe disability is acceptable and there is a wide range of business activities. Papworth is the more business-oriented, seeking some economic viability, but both encourage the development of the individual's interests and talents. The major criticism is that they both operate in isolation from the outside world. Others might argue that this is perfectly understandable and indeed desirable. The Spastics Society also runs workshops, and, in a recent development, has inaugurated a professional workshop at Milton Keynes, aiming to sell the talents of highly qualified, but severely handicapped, adults. Much of the work is done with microcomputers and it is hoped that a range of services will be available for hire. The other main providers of sheltered employment are the local authorities. The Warnock Report (DES, 1978) has recommended that sheltered workshops should introduce progressive programmes that encourage disabled people to move on to open employment, but this inevitably clashes with the workshop's main aim of being a productive unit.

4.16 Finally there is home employment, where the workers are traditionally the most exploited. Disabled people, housebound, can get caught up in the poor home-working rates, which gravely affect their earning capacity. At the other end of the scale, professional disabled people can gain grants from the BSD to set up their own home-based businesses. Solicitors, accountants, and computer programmers have benefited from this, and now run profitable organizations.

5 *Education and the labour market*

5.1 I have looked at the difficulties of gaining employment, and the range of possibilities available. The sections on school-leaving and further education have examined ways in which young people are prepared for obtaining a job.

5.2 It may have occurred to you that things don't quite add up, and that curious paradoxes and contradictions have cropped up. Unemployment for everybody is high and increasing, and this is reflected in high unemployment among handicapped people. Although all economic recessions have an end, technological change is going to mean a much higher permanent unemployment rate than we have ever known. Yet most further education for handicapped people is aimed at training them for work. However well designed these courses are, their success can never be self-generated. It depends on the nature of the labour market. Alan Walker (1980), as a result of his survey for the Warnock Committee on the employment of handicapped school-leavers, reached this conclusion: 'Additional teachers, educational psychologists and social workers alone, although important in an overall strategy, will not significantly alter the life chances of handicapped young people; it is the labour market which has the major influence on their lives.'

5.3 But the problems go deeper than this, because some provisions called 'training' are nothing of the kind. This is true of many, if not most, ATCs. If 'training' is to mean anything it must have an end, but the lot of many mentally handicapped adults is permanent training. This strange tale takes another twist when one comes across schools which aim to prepare their children for the ATC! Day provision for mentally handicapped adults is important, but if ATCs are not preparing people for work, then they are tacitly admitting that the 'trainees' have no place in the labour market.

Reading Now read Case study 34, 'An ESN(S) school and the labour market'. As you read it made a note of

(a) the ways in which the labour market affects the experiences of children at school and their families;

(b) any ways in which being at a school for ESN(S) children might in itself further exacerbate the young people's lowly position in the rush for jobs.

Comment (a) The absence of employment opportunities creates a vacuum in this school's curriculum. It can no longer argue that its teaching is relevant to having a job, but how satisfactory do you find the alternative aims offered?

(b) The child-centred philosophy is denied, if not belied, by that absence of child-centred outcomes. Either pupils go to the ATC, or they stay at home.

(c) Substantial numbers of teachers, parents and students are unsure or unhappy about the prospect of an ATC.

(d) The ATC itself is not isolated from the demands of the labour market and so does not provide an *alternative* to it. It is based on work for profit and so tries to exclude some of the people that open employment would exclude. What is particularly curious is that people who can do unskilled packing or assembly at an ATC are excluded from these jobs in the open market. Might it be that seeing mentally handicapped people do the jobs that normal people do would either seriously challenge our ideas of mental handicap or our feelings about work?

(e) Although hopes are expressed about open employment, actually very little is done practically to realize those hopes. The school has no careers officer, the LEA's careers officer is not involved, nor is the DRO, and there are no close links with any local employers.

(f) Parents believe that attending a special school in itself prejudices their children's chances of a job.

(g) Public expenditure cuts and the recession are now beginning to close off even the ATC as an option for some ESN(S) school leavers, as the competition for places increases and ESN(M) school leavers find places in ATCs.

5.4 David Lane (1980) studied the prospects of ESN(S) school leavers with Down's Syndrome and concluded that the education system tended to discourage their employment. He considered that the school, the DRO, and the parents often had far too low expectations of young people's abilities. He argued that these school-leavers are 'trained to become handicapped', and that the majority of them consider they could hold down a job in open employment. School-leavers' views of suitable work were in fact quite realistic: they included 'gardening, digging, helping in the shop'. Lane is very keen to encourage Down's Syndrome young people to expect to get jobs, as he argues that a 'caring environment' tends to label and further segregate. He concludes: 'the present writer would go as far as to say that becoming part of the community cannot realistically be achieved unless a person can work within it.'

5.5 Lane's recommendation is rarely taken up, but two examples are worth quoting. The first concerns mentally handicapped adults at an ATC. Peter Lowman is the manager of a food-preparation factory in East Anglia. He has successfully employed a number of mentally handicapped people from an ATC in his factory by giving them specific and careful training for the jobs they were to do, and by providing training for some of the other skills they would require, such as clocking in, finding the toilets, and using the canteen. The scheme was supported by a member of staff from the ATC working as an instructor in the factory, and helping relations between the mentally handicapped and other workers (Lowman, 1975). Here, mentally handicapped people were given help to do a specific job in the community, rather than non-specific training for nothing in particular.

5.6 A project in London recently adopted a similar approach with ESN(M) school leavers, in attempting to match skills to local job prospects. It analysed the skills required for specific jobs advertised in the local press, and devised a programme that concentrated on those skills, so that on leaving the project young people will be able to offer potential employers what they are looking for. The success of the project in getting local jobs by

relating the local courses to them has shown that colleges of further education elsewhere are training their students for almost certain unemployment unless the students are prepared to travel.

5.7 If training actually means what it says, and succeeds, handicapped school-leavers may be able to compete in the job market, if they are allowed to. Nevertheless, the current and future changes in the labour market affect handicapped young people as much as anybody, perhaps more. Schools and colleges will have to consider whether their courses can and should help young people to prepare for a life that may involve permanent unemployment. But equally important, society as a whole will have to consider what exactly people are going to do if they are not working.

6 *Conclusion*

6.1 Let me return to the quotation from one of the curricula described in Case study 37: 'What is needed is a scrutiny of the real needs of adolescents in the final years of schooling, links with continued education and community based activities and greater access to more appropriate provision.' How far does our present system of education for young people around school-leaving age meet real needs and provide the right services? How well do we prepare handicapped young people for life beyond full-time education? A straightforward answer to these questions is almost impossible, but we can point to some of the pitfalls that our special education system and our society seem to fall so readily into.

6.2 First of all, our attitudes to handicapped people make it difficult for them to lead ordinary adult lives. There is no doubt that we impose unnecessary restrictions on them, even as we attempt to meet their needs. Thus, for example, providing more places in ATCs may actually militate against increasing independence if it deflects from providing work in ordinary work-places; attendance at a special school appears to diminish, rather than enhance, careers office contact with school leavers, as Alan Walker's study showed. Apart from these institutional barriers, we can easily create more personal restrictions by not allowing handicapped people the opportunity to try things out, by doing too much for them. Even someone as obviously sensitive as Mrs Cunningham found that she was encouraging her mentally handicapped daughter's dependence.

6.3 Secondly and paradoxically, we often expect more of handicapped people than we would of ourselves. Independence is held up as the ultimate goal of special education, yet none of us is independent, and many of us rely to a great extent on the support of others to survive. More than this, we set standards for the disabled that are not reached by many normal people in our society. There are many people who by conventional standards would be considered incompetent: they live in untidy or dirty conditions, don't get a good diet, and so on. This is what many people fear would happen to some mentally handicapped adults if they lived alone. But why should we fear this? We cannot logically defend the rights of some to live in a mess, but deny the same to others.

6.4 Third, we seem extremely reluctant to listen to handicapped people themselves. This is most obviously true with mentally handicapped people, yet the few quotations in this unit and the case studies indicate that some of them at least have very clear and realistic notions about what they could do and couldn't do for a living. Many also have realistic ideas about their personal life. For example, some mentally handicapped people who live at one of the Camphill Villages have married. Some have had children and are coping well with minimal support from non-handicapped people living in the village. One couple left to set up house on a council estate. But one couple decided against having any children because they had seen how much work was involved by watching another woman rear a child. This is not to claim that mentally handicapped people are really as competent as anyone else, but they can and do think for themselves.

6.5 Fourth, we readily and frequently separate the context in which we train people to live from the context in which they will actually live. As a result we often train people to

do the wrong things. This happened when some mentally handicapped people were moved out of a mental handicap hospital into an ordinary house in Sheffield. They had been trained in a transitional house, but when they arrived at their final destination the kitchen was quite different and they could not adapt their recently learned skills. Actually putting people in the settings where they will live and work can provide much vital information on education and training requirements, as John Morton's experiment described in Case study 49 showed. The 'real needs' of handicapped young people, for they will need continued education, will only be fully apparent once we know the environment into which they will fit.

6.6 This means that the solution to the problems of school-leavers does not lie solely in the hands of education. We can teach job-finding skills, but the achievement is hollow if there are no jobs to find; we can teach social skills, but there is little point if there is no opportunity to practice them. People such as specialist careers officers and disablement resettlement officers are necessary to exploit a difficult situation to handicapped people's advantage, but they cannot force major structural changes in the job market which continues to be very difficult for handicapped people to break into. Similarly, if the only choices for mentally handicapped people are living at home or going to a subnormality hospital—and these are the only alternatives for many of them—then a child- or student-centred education will in the long term seem a bit of a sham. There is not time in this course to explore in depth the options for handicapped adults, but this is done very thoroughly in P251, *The Handicapped Person in the Community*. However, a most valuable way for you to spend any spare time you have is to find out what the employment or residential opportunities in your own area are for any group of handicapped young people. If you can then compare these with the school-leavers' programme and further education they get, so much the better. Do they add up?

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Tables

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The course

This text forms part of an Open University course, E241 *Special Needs in Education*. The complete list of units in the course appears below.

Unit 1/2 Special biographies	Unit 10 National perspectives
Unit 3 Family views	Unit 11 Biology and handicap
Unit 4 Education for adult life?	Unit 12 Psychology and special education
Unit 5/6 A special curriculum?	Unit 13 Handicap is social
Unit 7 The professionals	Unit 14 Eradicating handicap
Unit 8 The powers that be	Unit 15 Research in special education
Unit 9 Origins	Unit 16 An alternative system: a special imagination

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The author

Richard Tomlinson graduated in history from London University, after which he gained an MEd in educational psychology at the University of Illinois. He has been involved in teaching handicapped children, in particular school-leavers, since 1968. From 1971 to 1977 he was a lecturer at Hereward College of Further Education, which is one of the few residential colleges for severely handicapped school-leavers in the UK. In 1977 he joined the Open University as assistant adviser (disabled students). He is also the adviser for the Graeae Theatre Company and was the author and director of the company's first production, *Sideshow*.

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